According to an aspect of the present invention, there is provided an electronic transaction system for making a request for estimating or making a request for ordering an article or service required by an organization to a vendor outside the organization comprising: a processing unit installed inside the organization and having input means for inputting a request and inputting information related to the request on the basis of information sent from the vendor after the request has been made; and a management unit for managing communications between the processing unit in the organization and a processing unit in the vendor company, the management unit including: information entry means installed inside the organization for entering data input by the input means of the processing unit in the organization; transmission means for transmitting the request entered into the information entry means installed in the organization and request-related data input later as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company; and entry means installed outside the organization for transmitting data used for the vendor to make a reply to the request as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company and entering data input and sent by the processing unit in the vendor company.

Please REPLACE the paragraph at page 4, line 7 - page 5, line 3, with:

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided an electronic transaction system for making a request for ordering or a request for estimating articles or services required by an organization to vendors outside the organization comprising: first processing units installed in department offices of the organization for inputting requests and a second processing unit installed inside the organization for managing requests made by the first processing units, the second processing unit including management means for managing dates of delivery of articles or services input from processing units installed in the vendor companies and acceptance processing means for deciding, for each first processing unit that makes a new estimate request or order request, the presence or absence of order requests made by that first processing unit for which acceptance inspection of an article or service delivered has not been made within a predetermined period of time after its date of delivery and refusing the new request when the acceptance inspection has not been made.

Please REPLACE the paragraph at page 5, lines 4-23, with:

According to still another aspect of the present invention, there is provided an electronic transaction management unit for managing communications between a processing unit installed inside an organization for making a request for estimating or a request for ordering an article or service and a processing unit installed in a vendor company outside the organization comprising: information entry means installed inside the organization for entering data input by the input means of the processing unit in the organization; transmission means for transmitting the request entered into the information entry means installed in the organization and request-related data input later as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company; and entry means installed outside the organization for transmitting data used for the vendor to make a reply to the request as requested by the processing unit in the vendor company and entering data input and sent by the processing unit in the vendor company.

Please REPLACE the paragraph at page 10, lines 11-23 with:

In each office, a person in charge creates an electronic document for a request - either a request to estimate or a request to order a commodity - on the corresponding terminal and requests a manager to approve of it as it is, in the form of electronic data. Upon receipt of the approval of the manager, the person sends the request in the form of electronic data from the corresponding terminal to the terminal 19 (19') of the corresponding general affairs service center 15 (15'). When the request sent from the office is an estimate request, it is sent to the VAN center 16 as it is. In the VAN center, the request is recorded on the databases 23 and 24 and appears in a home page provided by the WWW server 20.

Please REPLACE the paragraph at page 11, line 12 - page 12, line 20, with:

In the case of an order request for a commodity, on the other hand, the general affairs service center first issues an estimate request to the vendor before the corresponding order request is made. That estimate request is processed in the same manner as described previously. Upon receipt of the results of the estimate, the service center makes an order request to a vendor after evaluation of the results. This order request is made by sending a

notification to the home page of the WWW server data to the effect that an order request is made to a specific vendor. If the ordering office has already received the results of the estimate, data to that effect is sent to the service center together with an order request. The evaluation made by the general affairs service center of the results of an estimate is one for, when two or more vendors 12 have sent the results of their estimates for an estimate request, deciding with which vendor an order is to be placed on the basis of evaluation criteria such as the total cost, item, discount amount, etc., as in the case of a public tender. In practice, the terminal in the general affairs service center can be set to automatically decide which vendor fulfills the evaluation criteria and then to make an order request to that vendor. At the same time, the person in charge and the management in the general affairs service center examine the data and make a decision, print the results as documentary evidence, and send the order request to the WWW server. When the automatically sent order request, and the order request sent after the examination and the decision are received, they are displayed in the home page of the WWW server 20, thus allowing the vendor 12 to know that an order request has been issued to it.

Please REPLACE the paragraph at page 17, lines 5-11, with:

In step S26, a request to order a commodity is input and then sent to the system manager. Data items on the order request includes requester information, desired term of delivery, item, and so on. If an estimate request has been made previously and a reply has been obtained from a vendor, an estimate number is also contained in the data items.

Please REPLACE the paragraph at page 17, lines 12-23, with:

Upon receipt of the order request from the office system, the system manager determines whether or not an estimate number is contained in the order requesting message (step S27). If it is not, the procedure goes to step S28 where an estimate request is entered in the general affairs service center. The steps that follow step S1 in FIG. 2 are then performed. If, on the other hand, an estimate number is contained, the procedure goes to step S29. When a reply to the estimate request made in step S28 is received, the procedure goes to steps S24 to

S29 of FIG. 2.

Please REPLACE the paragraph at page 17, line 24 - page 18, line 7

In step S29, the person in charge in the service center set the term of delivery and, in step S30, it is entered into an ordering database (1). The order request is then sent to the WWW server with the sender's code appended (step S31). The WWW server searches for an ordering database (2) corresponding to the sender's code and enters the ordering request (purchase request) into the ordering database (2) (step S32).

Please REPLACE the paragraph starting at page 19, line 8, with:

On the vendor side, the received HTML data is displayed (step S39), and a candidate for order acceptance processing is specified in the displayed list of records (step S40). The WWW server converts the record in the ordering database (2) corresponding to the specified candidate for processing into HTML data in the form of a statement of delivery and then sends it to the vendor (step S41). On the vendor side, the received HTML data is displayed (step S42) and printing is then specified (step S43). In response to this, the WWW server sends a statement of delivery (step S44). The statement is then printed on the vendor side (step S45). The WWW server enters the date of printing into the record in the ordering database (2) (step S46).

Please REPLACE the paragraph starting at page 20, line 11, with:

On the vendor side, the received HTML data is displayed (step S52) and a slip number of the statement of delivery obtained by the processing of FIG. 3 is input (step S53). Upon receipt of the slip number, the WWW server retrieves a record corresponding to the slip number from the ordering database (2) (step S54) and then sends that record converted into HTML data to the vendor (step S55). On the vendor side, the received HTML data is displayed (step 56) and the date of shipment is then entered (step S57). The WWW server placed the date of shipment in the corresponding record in the ordering database (2) (step S58). That record which has not yet been sent but contains the date of shipment is sent to the system manager (step S59). The